

Remarks:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-7 and 10-20 are now in the application. Claims 1 and 11 have been amended. Claims 19 and 29 have been added.

Support for the subject matter of newly added claims 19 and 20 can be found on page 6, lines 6-7, of the instant application.

In item 1 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 1-7 and 10 have been rejected as being anticipated by *Chao et al.* (US 5,591,673) under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

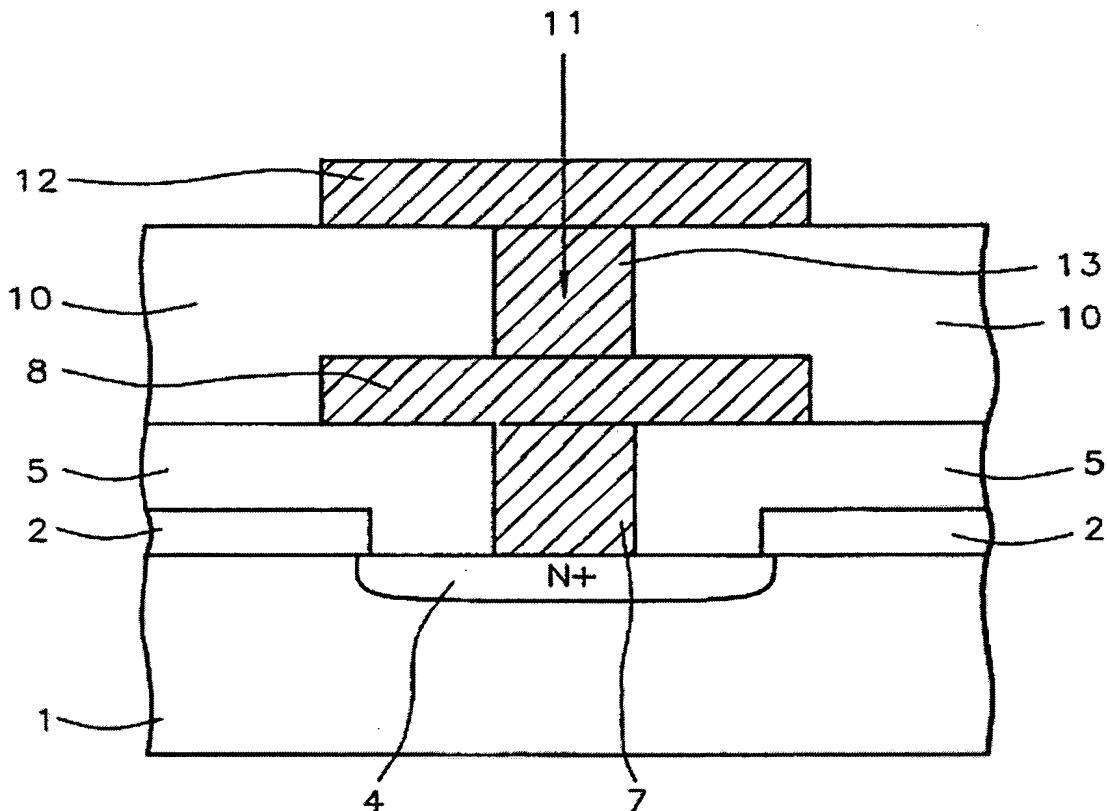
In item 3 on page 4 of the Office action, claims 11-18 have been rejected as being obvious over *Chao et al.* in view of *Huang* (US 6,353,269) under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

In the paragraph bridging pages 2-3 of the Office action, the Examiner stated that:

As to claim 1, *Chao et al.* shows, referring to figure 7, an integrated circuit structure having a first layer, a second layer, and an intermediate layer, a contact structure extending through the first layer, the second layer, and the intermediate layer for electrically connecting regions of the semiconductor structure. The contact structure has a first contact hole 13 filling in the first layer 10, a second contact hole 7 filling in the second layer 5, and an intermediate structure 8 in the intermediate layer and connecting the first contact hole 13 filling with the second contact hole 7 filling.

The intermediate structure forms an interconnect having a length between longitudinal ends thereof and a given width and a contact area at each of the longitudinal ends with a contact area width greater than the given width.

Fig. 7 of Chao et al. is reproduced below:



The anticipation rejection and the above-noted comments by the Examiner have been considered and claims 1 and 10 have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Support for the changes is found, for example, in Fig. 3 of the drawings, on page 5, lines 20-21, of the instant application ("the interconnect is formed with end areas that are wider than the **connecting structure** in between").

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 (similarly claim 11) as amended calls for, *inter alia*:

an intermediate structure in the intermediate layer disposed between the first layer and the second layer and connecting said first contact hole filling with said second contact hole filling, said intermediate structure forming an interconnect having a length between longitudinal ends thereof, said interconnect having a contact area at each of said longitudinal ends with a contact area width perpendicular to said length, and a connecting structure connecting said contact areas, said connecting structure having a connecting structure area with a connecting structure area width perpendicular to said length, said contact area **width** being **greater** than said connecting structure area **width**.

The specification of *Chao et al.* does not contain any description regarding the form or shape of the "intermediate structure 8". Consequently, *Chao et al.* do not show a contact area **width** that is **greater** than the connecting structure area **width**, as recited in claims 1 and 11 of the instant application. Therefore, the invention as recited in claims 1 and 11 of the instant application is believed not to be anticipated by *Chao et al.*.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that *Chao et al.* do not show the features of claims 1 and 11. Claims 1 and 11 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and because claims 2-7 and 10-20 are ultimately dependent on either claim 1 or claim 11, they are believed to be patentable as well.

Considering the deficiencies of the primary reference *Chao et al.*, it is believed not to be necessary at this stage to address the secondary reference *Huang* applied in the rejection of dependent claims 11-18, and whether or not there is sufficient suggestion or motivation with a reasonable expectation of success for modifying or combining the references as required by MPEP § 2143.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-7 and 10-20 are solicited.

If an extension of time is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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July 2, 2003

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